



Director of
Central
Intelligence

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OCPAS/CIG

CY# 285

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National Intelligence Daily

*Monday
23 January 1984*

~~Top Secret~~

CPAS NID 84-018JX

23 January 1984

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NIGERIA: Tensions Within Military

Hints of discontent and plotting continue to be noted among lower ranking military officers despite recent efforts by Head of State Buhari to rally their support. []

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The US Consulate in Kaduna has learned []
about complaints from midlevel Army officers in two northern states regarding government slowness in getting the new administration moving, rooting out corruption, and controlling prices. []

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Comment: Unless General Buhari can improve the standing of his regime in the eyes of midlevel officers, an attempted counter coup by younger and less conservative officers will remain a likely possibility in the next six months. Low-ranking officers are likely to see the regime's handling of former civilian officials and allegations of corruption against its senior military members as a test of the new government's resolve to implement reforms. []

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Nigeria's economic crisis will compound Buhari's vulnerability, particularly as the need to appease the junior military is likely to take precedence over reviving the economy. As a consequence, Buhari may soon find his government subject to growing criticism for drift and indecision, which will strengthen the climate for coup plotting. []

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USSR-AFGHANISTAN: More Media Coverage

Increased attention by the Soviet media to Afghanistan probably reflects in part internal pressures for expanded coverage. []

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Since mid-December a series of articles have portrayed conditions in Afghanistan as difficult but improving. An authoritative editorial in *Pravda* on 2 January called the US the principal obstacle to a political settlement, and reiterated major elements of the USSR's position on the outlook for Afghanistan. Recent articles also have attacked China, Pakistan, the UK, West Germany, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Iran for allegedly aiding the resistance. []

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Two articles in *Red Star* have described in detail the heroism of Soviet personnel in defending against two separate insurgent attacks on a convoy and an airfield. One revealed in passing that the USSR has suffered seven more casualties. []

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Comment: The coverage is designed in part to counter the increased attention the Western press pays to Afghanistan on the anniversary of the invasion. In addition, Soviet journalists periodically claim they are under pressure from the public, particularly families of men serving in Afghanistan, to provide more information about the conditions faced by Soviet troops. A recent Soviet radiobroadcast acknowledged receiving "many" letters asking why Soviet soldiers are still in Afghanistan. []

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The articles in *Red Star* illustrate the gradual expansion since 1981 of the practice of acknowledging intermittently the involvement of Soviet troops in the fighting. These articles suggest the leadership may be under pressure from elements of the military establishment to give more coverage to the valor of Soviet soldiers. []

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The USSR's coverage of Afghanistan, however, is still circumscribed by Moscow's concern to limit internal and international attention to the conflict. Soviet media continue to paint an unrealistic picture of conditions in Afghanistan. []

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The revelation of seven additional casualties raises Moscow's public tally of its losses in Afghanistan to 19—seven killed and 12 wounded. Current US estimates put Soviet personnel losses at about 17,000. []

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USSR-EASTERN EUROPE: Status of Economic Summit

Preparations for an economic summit of CEMA members have been completed, and only the continued absence of General Secretary Andropov is holding up scheduling of the meeting. []

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The Yugoslav press, citing sources at the CEMA Secretariat, reports that the Soviets and East Europeans have agreed in principle on the summit agenda after more than a year of discussions. The most important decision is to tie deliveries of Soviet energy and raw materials more closely to East European investment in Soviet resource development projects. []

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Stricter adherence to trade commitments has been included in order to tighten coordination of CEMA members' economic plans. Members also have agreed to grant state enterprises new freedom to deal directly with similar enterprises in other member countries. []

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Press reports state the Soviets hinted last month that the meeting might be held at the end of February. Press sources at East European embassies in Moscow, however, now expect a delay of several more months. []

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Comment: Late last year other sources also said substantive preparations for the summit were complete. The meeting probably will do no more than ratify these decisions. []

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Moscow originally proposed sweeping changes that would have markedly increased economic integration in CEMA, but opposition by the East Europeans apparently forced the Soviets to abandon these proposals. The changes reported by the Yugoslavs are not likely to improve CEMA's effectiveness notably. []

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PANAMA: Presidential Candidate

Defense Forces Commander Noriega apparently has chosen World Bank official Nicolas Barletta as the government's presidential candidate in the elections in May.

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the US Embassy says Noriega told leaders of the ruling Democratic Revolutionary Party that they have to support a coalition headed by Barletta, and party officials subsequently announced they are backing him.

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Opposition to Barletta, however, has surfaced among some leaders of the Liberal, Republican, and Labor Parties. They fear he will be unable to defeat longtime opposition figure Arnulfo Arias, who has been deposed as President three times in the past.

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President de la Espriella, meanwhile, has vetoed amendments to the electoral law that would have removed some of the legal barriers to his reelection. The proposed changes were attacked by the opposition, and the military later criticized the legislation.

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Comment: Barletta's candidacy has drawn little support thus far because he is not a party member and has lived outside Panama for the last six years. Nevertheless, his political independence, economic credentials, and reputation for honesty make him an attractive unity candidate.

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If the planned coalition around Barletta falters, however, Noriega may again turn to de la Espriella. The attempted revision of the election laws probably was intended to test public reaction to such a move, as well as to disrupt the plans of the opposition.

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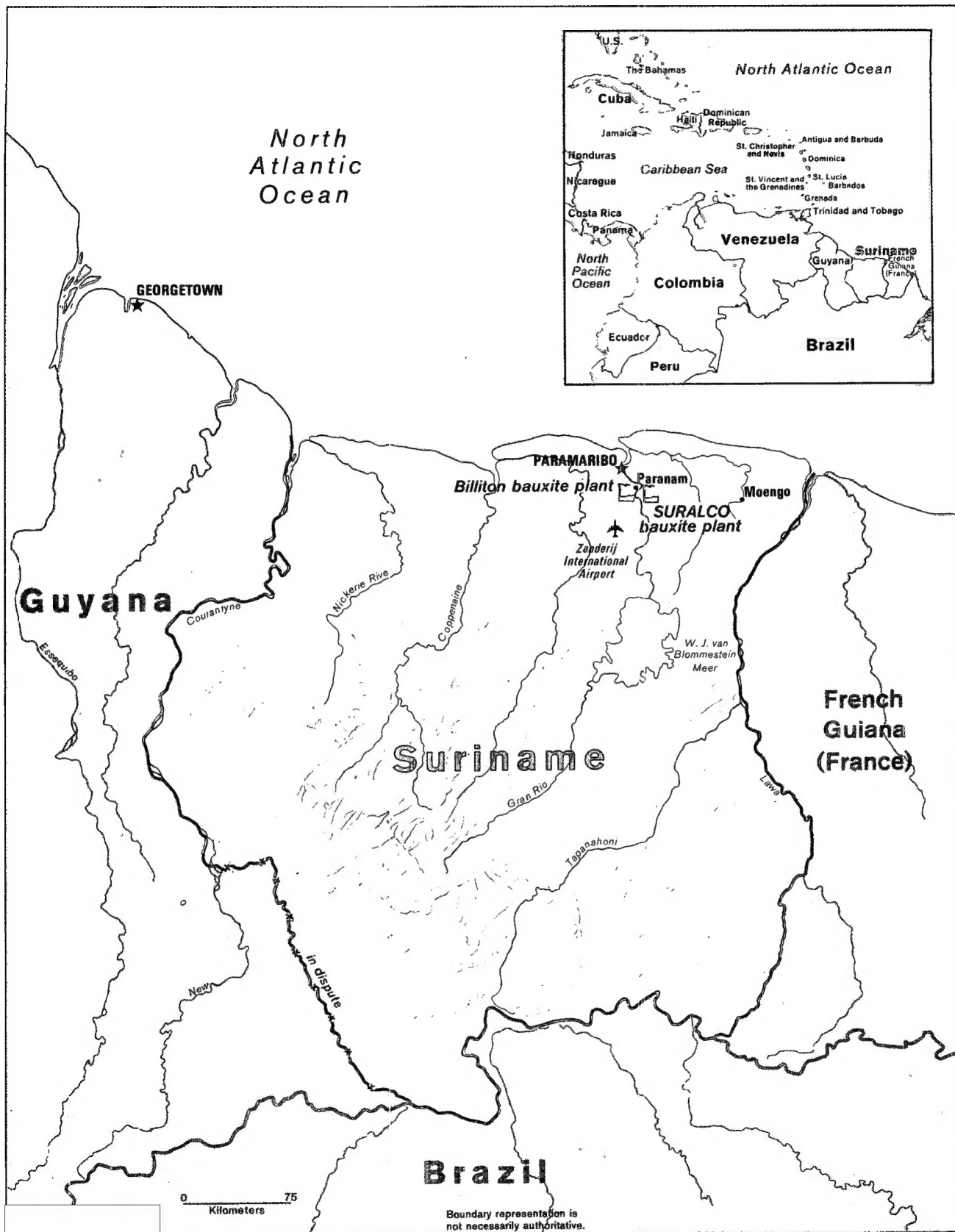
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SURINAME: Strike Settlement Reached

Workers at the Suralco bauxite plant have agreed to return to work this morning, and workers at the Billiton and Moengo plants are expected to follow suit. []

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Suralco says it expects to reopen with a complete shift today and has canceled its earlier suspension of collective bargaining agreements with the union. Under the settlement, each Suralco worker will receive a tax-free grant from the government and a loan advance from the company totaling nearly \$800. Suralco will advance the government funds from future payments to guarantee the grants. []

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The company claims that no political demands were involved in its agreement with union leader Fred Derby, and it says it will not use the strike as justification for a reduction in the work force. Suralco believes, however, that the government has identified some nonunion staff workers as troublemakers and may prosecute them later. []

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Company officers told the US Embassy that workers at the Dutch-owned Billiton bauxite plant were to be approached by Derby yesterday with the same offer made to Suralco workers. The Embassy believes that the Billiton workers will go along with any agreement accepted by the more numerous Suralco workers and that the Moengo miners will follow suit. []

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Comment: The test of the strike settlement will be whether or not the workers stay on the job this coming week. If the settlement holds, the strike will have achieved most of the workers' economic demands and demonstrated the unpopularity of Army Commander Bouterse and his regime. In addition, the government's agreement with Suralco—and particularly with Billiton and Moengo—will have given Derby a victory in his long struggle to rebuild bridges between worker and government and will have enhanced his position in the union. []

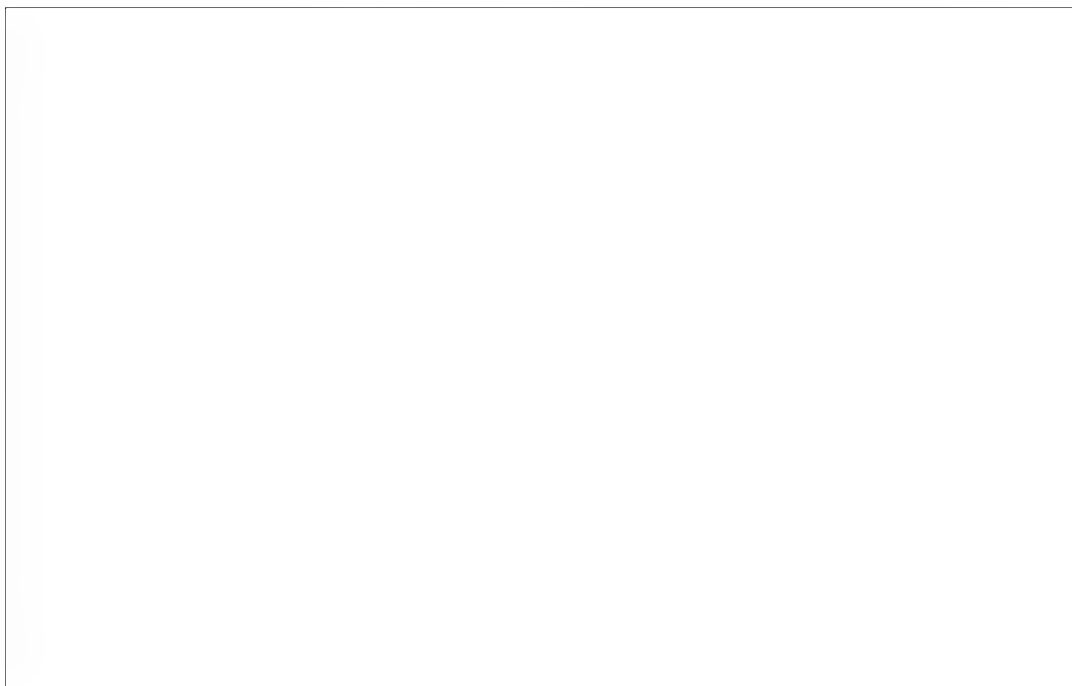
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LIBYA-PLO: Terrorist Attack

Libya is accusing supporters of PLO leader Arafat of shooting its senior diplomatic representative in Rome on Saturday. A previously unknown Arab group calling itself "al-Borkan," or "Volcano," is claiming responsibility, according to press sources.

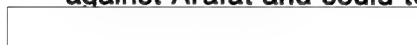
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Comment: Arafat may have directed PLO loyalists to strike at Libya because of Libyan leader Qadhafi's continuing strong support for PLO dissidents. The attack probably will prompt Libyan reprisals against Arafat and could touch off increasing violence by both sides.

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FRANCE-LEBANON: Relations With Factional Leaders

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[redacted]

[redacted] French diplomats have told the US Embassy in Damascus that earlier this month Junblatt reacted negatively to France's attempt to gain Syrian support for expanding the UN role in Lebanon—a proposal that is a key to French plans for an orderly withdrawal of MNF contingents from Beirut. [redacted]

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Comment: In recent months, Paris has approached virtually every interested party in the Middle East except the faction leaders for support of its plan to transfer MNF peacekeeping responsibilities to an enlarged UN force. [redacted]

[redacted]

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COLOMBIA: Problems With the Military

The Defense Minister and several other senior officers have resigned over policy differences with President Betancur, but the threat of a coup is remote. In public remarks [redacted]

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[redacted] top military officials criticized the government's policies toward guerrillas, its interest in restoring ties with Cuba, and the Contadora initiative. [redacted]

[redacted]

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Comment: This is the military's most serious disagreement with Betancur. The armed forces reaction, however, will be muted by a longstanding respect for democracy, broad public support of the President and his domestic peace efforts, and the appointment of another hardliner as the new Defense Minister. Betancur now may be more inclined to assert his authority and to redouble his efforts on the Contadora initiative. He also may move ahead with several pet projects, including the establishment of commercial relations with Cuba and the reopening of truce talks with Colombia's major insurgent groups. [redacted]

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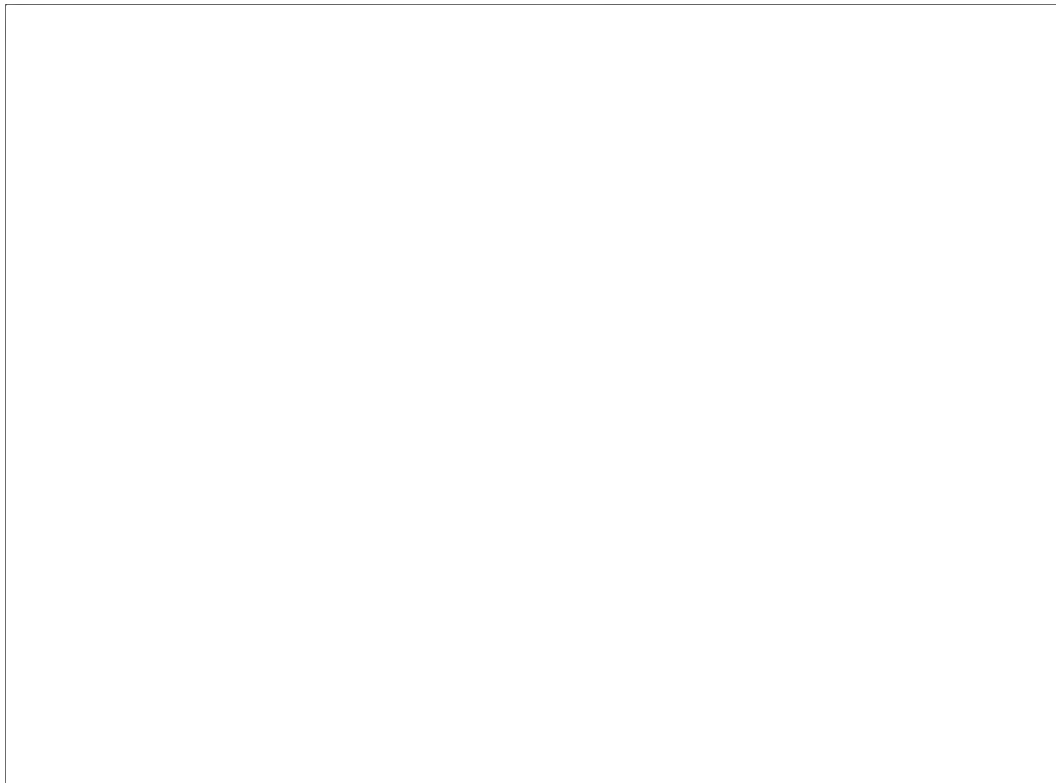
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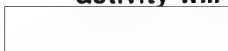
PHILIPPINES: Bracing for Labor Layoffs

The US Embassy and some Philippine officials anticipate layoffs of some 200,000 full-time workers in the next few months because of declining economic activity. Manila has appealed to the US for emergency food grain assistance in an effort to forestall unrest, and it is working with the Catholic Church on a joint emergency food program. The government is encouraging private firms to advance wages to dismissed workers, and it will provide workers with social security assistance for three months. [redacted]

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Comment: Manila and other urban centers will be hardest hit by the layoffs because manufacturing activities are concentrated there. Thus far organized labor has remained quiet, but demonstrations are almost certain to occur as layoffs increase. The government's measures will help relieve some of the hardship, but, until IMF negotiations for a \$650 million standby credit are concluded and normal commercial financing of import trade resumes, economic activity will remain slow and workers will continue to lose their jobs.

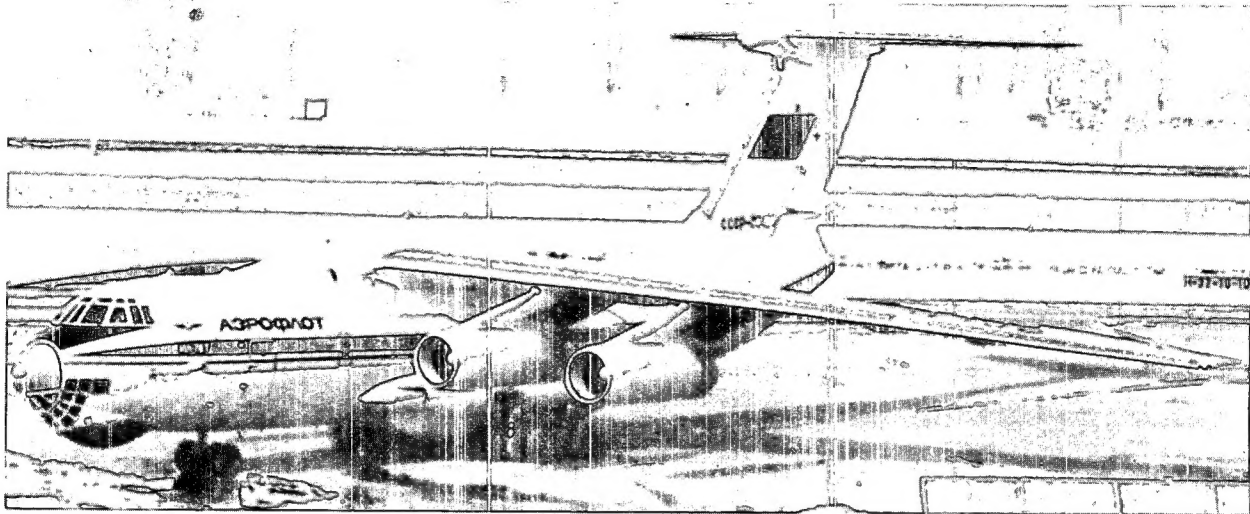
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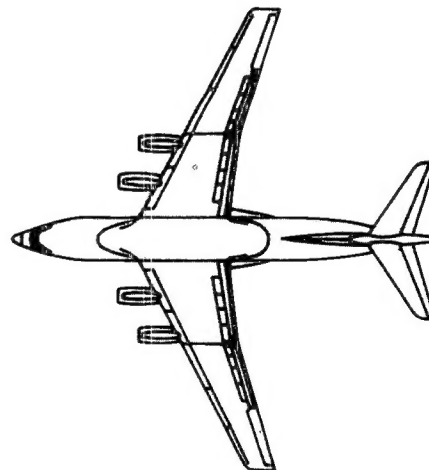
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IL-76 Transport Aircraft**Characteristics:**

Maximum paradrop radius	3,250 km
with	14,750 kg
Maximum airlift range	3,650 km
with maximum payload	40,000 kg
Average cruise speed	770 km/h
Year operational	1974



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INDIA-USSR: Decision To Buy Military Transports

New Delhi has announced its decision to buy Soviet IL-76 transport aircraft to replace its aging fleet of AN-12s. [REDACTED]

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According to US defense attaches, the first transports will begin arriving this spring. [REDACTED]

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Comment: The decision appears to rule out the sale of similar aircraft by the US. Although US defense attaches indicate that the Indian Air Force preferred the US C-130 over the IL-76, the government's choice probably was swayed in part by concessionary funding and perceptions of the USSR as a more reliable arms supplier. Moscow also may have tempted India with an offer of future assistance in modifying the transport for an airborne warning and control system or for an aerial refueling capability. [REDACTED]

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